

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06928 061751Z
ACTION EUR-12

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SSO-00 BIB-01 SS-15 PM-05 NSCE-00 L-03 /047 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0084
INFO USICA WASHDC

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STATE FOR EUR/SOV, PA

USICA FOR EU

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PROP, SOPN, UR
SUBJECT: EMBASSY PROTEST OVER TV ATTACK ON CORRESPONDENTS

REF: MOSCOW 6537

1. EMBASSY PRESS AND CULTURAL COUNSELOR, ACCOMPANIED BY
PRESS ATTACHE, CALLED ON MFA/PRESS DEPUTY CHIEF VALENTIN
ANDREYEVICH KHAZOV APRIL 6 TO DELIVER FORMAL PROTEST NOTE
RE APRIL 1 TELEVISION PROGRAM ACCUSING FIVE AMERICAN
CORRESPONDENTS (SINCE DEPARTED) OF TIES WITH U.S.
INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES (REFTEL). ALSO PRESENT ON SOVIET
SIDE WAS COUNSELOR VITALIY KONSTANTINOVICH ZHURAVLEV.
FULL TEXT OF NOTE FOLLOWS:

(BEGIN TEXT) NOTE 540

--THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WISHES TO
REGISTER A STRONG PROTEST WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS OVER A
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 06928 061751Z

PROGRAM SHOWN ON SOVIET TELEVISION APRIL 1 WHICH RAISED
UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING SUPPOSED LINKS BETWEEN
AMERICAN JOURNALISTS FORMERLY RESIDENT IN MOSCOW AND
INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING ORGANIZATIONS.

--TO PUBLICLY BANDY ABOUT SUCH BASELESS AND UNSUBSTANTIAT-
ED CHARGES OVER A GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIUM IS CLEARLY A CRUDE ATTEMPT TO CREATE A FALSE IMPRESSION IN THE MINDS OF THE SOVIET PUBLIC AND POISON THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH FOREIGN NEWSMEN CARRY OUT THEIR LEGITIMATE JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITIES. AS SUCH, THE DECISION TO BROADCAST SUCH A PROGRAM WAS CLEARLY AND DIRECTLY IN OPPOSITION TO COMMITMENTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOVIET UNION IN SIGNING THE FINAL ACT OF THE 1975 HELSINKI CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.

--THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA THEREFORE EXPRESSES ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AND AMAZEMENT THAT RESPONSIBLE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WOULD PERMIT SUCH AN ACTION WHICH CAN IN NO WAY CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION AND INDEED CAN ONLY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CREATION OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. THE EMBASSY INSISTS THAT THE MINISTRY CONVEY THE EMBASSY'S FIRM PROTEST TO THE RESPONSIBLE SOVIET INSTITUTIONS AND THAT THE MINISTRY TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT SUCH PROGRAMMING IS NOT REPEATED IN THE FUTURE.

--EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
--MOSCOW, U.S.S.R.
--APRIL 3, 1978 (END TEXT)

2. BOTH KHAZOV AND ZHURAVLEV CLAIMED NOT TO HAVE SEEN OR HEARD OF PROGRAM IN QUESTION. KHAZOV ATTEMPTED TO SIDE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 06928 061751Z

STEP MATTER BY SAYING THAT PROTEST SHOULD PROPERLY BE DIRECTED TO STATE COMMITTEE FOR TELEVISION AND RADIO BUT, WHEN HE WAS REMINDED THAT NOTE AMONG OTHER THINGS INSISTED THAT MFA PASS EMBASSY'S VIEWS ON TO APPROPRIATE PEOPLE (I.E. GOSTELERADIO), HE SAID HE WOULD CONVEY THE MESSAGE.

3. P & C COUNSELOR, IN SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGE, NOTED THAT MFA/PRESS HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOVIET RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE EFFECT SUCH TELEVISED ACCUSATIONS HAVE ON GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AND ON HOW SOVIET UNION IS REPORTED IN WEST. P & C COUNSELOR ADDED THAT APPEARANCE OF SUCH A PROGRAM IMPLIES THAT THIS IS "CONSIDERED STATEMENT" BY HIGHER SOVIET AUTHORITIES AND NOT JUST RANDOM ACT OF TELEVISION EDITOR OR PRODUCER. KHAZOV, HOWEVER, CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN THAT PROGRAM WAS SHOWN WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION WITH MFA/PRESS AND, IN A PARTICULARLY SPECIOUS BIT OF VERBAL RAZZLE-DAZZLE, THAT TV COMMENTATORS "HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMMENT ON ANY SUBJECT WITHOUT GETTING ANYONE'S APPROVAL." TOON

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